

Site Address: 2 Orchard Way 15/01057/F
Bicester OX26 2EJ

Ward: Bicester West

District Councillor: Cllrs Bolster,
Hurle, and Sibley

Case Officer: Aitchison Raffety

Recommendation: Refusal

Applicant: Mr J Prpa

Application Description: Two storey side extension and additional off street parking

Committee Referral : Members Request

1. Site Description and Proposed Development

- 1.1 Number 2 is a two storey semi-detached property located on the north side of Orchard Way, Bicester. The surrounding area is residential and consists of mainly semi-detached two storey dwellings.
- 1.2 The proposed development would involve the construction of a two storey side extension measuring 7.3m in width and 7.5m in depth. Further, an extended area of hardstanding is proposed at the front of the site providing off street parking for up to four vehicles.
- 1.3 The development would provide six additional bedrooms creating a total of nine.

2. Application Publicity

- 2.1 The application has been advertised by way of neighbour letter. The final date for comment was 10 July 2015.

No representations have been received.

3. Consultations

3.1 Bicester Town Council:

Bicester Town Council objects to this application as an overdevelopment of the site.

Consultees

3.2 Oxfordshire County Council Consultees

Highways:

No representation received.

4. Relevant National and Local Policy and Guidance

4.1 Development Plan Policy

Adopted Cherwell Local Plan (Saved Policies)

C28: Layout, design and external appearance of new development
C30: Design of new residential development

Submission Cherwell Local Plan (January 2014)

The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 was formally adopted by Cherwell District Council on 20 July 2015. The Plan provides the strategic planning policy framework and sets out strategic site allocations for the District to 2031. Now adopted, the Plan forms part of the statutory development plan and provides the basis for decisions on land use planning affecting Cherwell District. The following policies are considered to be relevant:-

PSD1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

4.2 Other Material Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

Planning Practice Guidance

Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011

In December 2004 the Council resolved that all work to proceed towards the statutory adoption of a draft Cherwell Local Plan 2011 be discontinued. However, on 13 December 2004 the Council approved the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 as interim planning policy for development control purposes. Therefore this plan does not have Development Plan status, but it can be considered as a material planning consideration. The policies listed below are considered to be material to this case and are not replicated by saved Development Plan policy:-

D6 The Quality of Architecture
TR11 Parking

5. Appraisal

5.1 The key issues for consideration in this application are:-

- Character, Appearance and Impact on the original building
- Neighbour Amenity
- Parking Provision and Highway Safety

Character, Appearance and Impact on the original building

- 5.2 The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, stating *'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development... and should contribute positively to making places better for people.'* It stresses the need to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings and smaller developments like this proposal. While it states that local authorities should not impose architectural styles or particular tastes, it reinforces that it is also important to consider local character and distinctiveness, continuing that *'permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'.*
- 5.3 Saved Policies C28 and C30 of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan support the use of good design, in line with the provisions of the NPPF outlined above and full weight should therefore be attached to the provisions of these policies.
- 5.4 Policy C28 of the Local Plan states *'control will be exercised over all new development, including conversions and extensions, to ensure that the standards of layout, design and external appearance including the choice of external-finish materials, are sympathetic to the character of the urban or rural context of that development'.*
- 5.5 Further, Policy C30 states *'design control will be exercised to ensure that new housing development is compatible with the appearance, character, layout, scale and density of existing dwellings in the vicinity'.*
- 5.6 While the proposed extension would be set back from the existing front elevation it would be wider than the original building (existing property 5.9m, proposed extension 7.3m), and therefore would fail to result in a subservient addition. The width of the extension would dominate the site and would fail to leave the existing property predominant. While it is noted that the application site is wider than the majority of surrounding plots and therefore can accommodate a wider than average extension, the creation of an extension which is wider than the original building is considered unacceptable on design grounds.
- 5.7 The adverse width of the extension would be exacerbated by the stark appearance of the front elevation which would feature a limited number of openings. As a result, the extension would have a bland appearance that would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the street.
- 5.8 The development would also result in the creation of an extended area of hardstanding to accommodate a total of four parked vehicles. This would result in the loss of existing soft landscaping (boundary hedge) and would result in the site frontage being dominated by hardstanding and parked cars. This, as well as the adverse width and scale of the proposed side extension, would impact adversely on the visual amenity and character of both the existing site and the wider street scene.
- 5.9 To conclude, the proposed development is considered to be unacceptable on design grounds. The width and adverse design of the extension would fail to

relate accordingly to the size and character of the existing building and together with the proposed area of hardstanding and loss of existing soft landscaping would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the street scene. The proposal therefore fails to comply with adopted Local Plan Policies C28 and C30 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Neighbour Amenity

- 5.10 Despite the scale and width of the extension the proposal would not impact adversely on the residential amenity of surrounding occupiers.
- 5.11 The extension would be almost completely obscured from the occupiers of the adjoining property (4 Orchard Way) by the existing property, with the only visible element being the 1.8m deep rear projection - which would be set in over 5m from the common boundary.
- 5.12 The flank wall of the extension would be located approximately 4m from the common boundary with Walnut House and therefore, despite its height and depth, would not impact adversely on the amenity of this property.
- 5.13 The new rear facing first floor openings would be located approximately 1.8m further rearward than the existing first floor rear facing openings. However, a distance of 12m between the proposed openings and the rear garden of Primrose Cottage would be retained and therefore the privacy of these occupiers would not be adversely compromised.
- 5.14 It is also important to consider whether the proposed scheme would provide a satisfactory standard of environment for future occupiers of the dwelling. The extension would result in the creation six additional bedrooms (all of which would be ensuite), and therefore a total of nine. The number of bedrooms, compared to the modest size of the existing kitchen, living and proposed dining area would create a very poor standard of environment for future occupiers to the detriment of their residential amenity.
- 5.15 Policy C30 (iii) states that design control should ensure that new development or any proposal for the extension or conversion of an existing dwelling provides standards of amenity and privacy acceptable to the Local Planning Authority. As set out above, in this case the proposed amount of shared internal amenity space would not be commensurate to the proposed number of bedrooms (and therefore potential number of occupiers), and as a result the standard of environment provided would not be sufficient, contrary to the provisions of Policy 30 (iii) of the Local Plan.
- 5.16 To conclude, while the development would not impact adversely on the amenity of surrounding residents it would fail to provide an acceptable standard of environment for future occupiers of the dwelling. Consequently, the application would be contrary to Policies C28 and C30 of the Local Plan and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Parking Provision and Highway Safety

- 5.17 The existing dropped kerb would be extended and additional hardstanding, providing off-street parking for up to four vehicles, would be created at the front of the site.
- 5.18 The Highway Authority was consulted but has not provided comments for the scheme. Despite the proposed number of bedrooms (9), given the building would continue to function as a single residential dwelling (a householder planning application has been submitted); the provision of four parking spaces is considered to be acceptable. It should be noted that the site is sustainably located to the north of Bicester town centre and, therefore, access to local services and amenities is available both on foot and via local public transport networks.

Consultation with Applicant

- 5.19 The applicant has been contacted and informed of the reasons for refusal.

Conclusion

- 5.20 To conclude, by reason of its design, scale and width, the proposed two storey side extension would fail to respect the character and size of the original building and would adversely dominate the existing plot. Further, the proposed area of hardstanding would have a detrimental impact on the character of the site and the visual amenity of the local area, contrary to Policies C28 and C30 of the Cherwell District Council Local Plan 1996 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
- 5.21 The proposed development would fail to achieve an acceptable standard of environment for future occupiers of the dwelling. The proposed number of bedrooms (9) compared to the size and layout of the proposed shared internal amenity space would not cater sufficiently for the everyday needs of future occupiers to the detriment of their residential amenity. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy C30 (iii) of the Cherwell District Council Local Plan 1996 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

6. Recommendation

Refusal, subject to the following reasons:-

1. The proposed side extension would, by reason of its design, size and width, result in a visually obtrusive and unsympathetic appearance and fail to relate acceptably to the character and appearance of the existing building and surrounding area. Further, the excessive level of hardstanding and parking arrangement would have a detrimental impact on visual amenity. The proposed development would therefore have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the existing building, street scene and surrounding area, contrary to the provisions of Policies C28 and C30 of the Cherwell District

Council Local Plan, 1996 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012.

2. The proposed development would fail to achieve an acceptable standard of environment for future occupiers of the dwelling. The proposed number of bedrooms (9) compared to the size and layout of the proposed shared internal amenity space would not cater sufficiently for the everyday needs of future occupiers to the detriment of their residential amenity. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy C30 (iii) of the Cherwell District Council Local Plan, 1996 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012.

Statement of Engagement

It was not possible to amend the application to comply with local policy. The Local Planning Authority encourages applicants to engage in pre-application discussions as advocated under paragraph 188 of the NPPF. The applicant did not engage in pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority and the form of development proposed fails to comply with the requirements of the Development Plan and does not improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the District.